President’s Commission on LGBTQ Affairs
May 2015

I. Overview

Wake Forest University President Nathan O. Hatch convened the President’s Commission on LGBTQ Affairs in the Fall of 2014 to further understand and meet the needs of LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff. President Hatch communicated to the Commission his hope that the process would initiate a set of conversations across campus throughout the year, out of which insights could be gained and improvements and changes could be identified in order to continue to improve the life and experience for all members of the Wake Forest University community. This report summarizes the work of the Commission and its subcommittees during the 2014–15 academic year. The Commission, chaired by Vice President of Campus Life Penny Rue, met quarterly throughout the year. Represented within the Commission were faculty, staff, and students from a variety of fields, offices, and departments. A full list of Commission membership is located in Appendix A. The dates of the full Commission meetings can be found in Appendix B.

During the first meeting held on Wednesday, September 3, 2014, the commission discussed the best ways to accomplish the task of making LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff feel that Wake Forest is their home. Under the leadership of Dr. Rue, the Commission created four subgroups: Assessment, led by Carmen Canales, Best Practices, led by Shonda Jones, Policy, led by Kriss Dinkins, and Intersectionality, led by Lynn Sutton. These subgroups planned to investigate and develop a list of recommendations for review by the Commission and the President. The Commission collectively understood that much of the work of the Commission would occur in the subgroups and the larger Commission meetings would serve as an opportunity to seek input, share results, and consider future efforts and/or implications.

The subgroups worked toward their goals in a variety of ways. The Assessment subgroup held a community forum and a moderated conversation to better
understand the experiences of LGBTQ students, faculty and staff. The Assessment subgroup has also researched community-wide assessment options for LGBTQ specific data collection which will be reflected in their recommendations. The Best Practices subgroup conducted interviews with peer institutions who are well-ranked in regards to LGBTQ inclusion. From these interviews, the Best Practices subgroup developed recommendations as well identified strength areas. The Policy subgroup researched institutional policies at Wake Forest as well as other institutions with well-regarded LGBTQ inclusion to develop a list of policy recommendations. The Best Practices and Policy subgroup often worked in tandem to create complimentary recommendations. Regular meetings of the sub-committee chairs and Commission staff ensured regular communication.

The Commission sought to remain cognizant of the intersecting identities of LGBTQ persons, acknowledging that the identities we carry may affect how we situate ourselves within the Wake Forest community. The Intersectionality Committee convened its own meetings, and each of its members also served on one other subcommittee, acting as an advocate for intersectional thought within that sphere. Each Intersectional ambassador upheld the charge to envision how differing personal experiences and circumstances may produce differing policy implications; to ensure that LGBTQ+ persons of color are consistently considered and included in problem-identification and decision making; and to consider how factors such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, and religious affiliation inform best practices and policies.

II. Assessment Subcommittee

A. Charge

The Assessment subgroup will conduct a campus-wide climate assessment through the use of forums, listening groups, and surveys.

B. Membership
• Carmen Canales, Convener
• Brook Davis
• Adam Goldstein
• Sonia Kuguru, Intersectionality Committee Adviser
• Angela Mazaris
• Mark Petersen
• Eric Proctor
• Penny Rue
• José Villalba
• Staff: Rob Powell, Kimberly Quick

C. Deliberative Process

The subcommittee began by evaluating the University’s recent engagement-related assessment efforts, which have been decentralized. Despite numerous ad hoc initiatives from different areas, the University has not gathered comprehensive engagement data through a campus-wide climate survey since 2009. Since that time, the University has become more diverse than ever, while experiencing climate issues related to bias, event planning and management, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

These factors led the subcommittee to focus their research on campus climate assessment in a broad sense. In addition to generating LGBTQ-specific metrics, this approach will help explore intersectionality as it relates to other engagement factors.

D. Research

The subcommittee conducted research by hosting a listening session in which LGBTQ students provided input to Commission members and additional University administrators. A community forum, following this event, provided further insight, as students, faculty, and staff shared their experiences as LGBTQ people and allies. The subcommittee identified key themes and collaborated with the full President’s Commission and other University constituents on plans for enhancements.
Additionally, the subcommittee researched survey partners who could support Wake Forest’s assessment efforts. Factors examined included:

- Ability to gather and analyze data related to the LGBTQ population
- Benchmarking/reporting (e.g., by peer universities, aspirational peers, public/private institutions, Carnegie classification, enrollment, size, region, and results over time)
- Consulting/action planning
- Customization
- Distribution methods (online, mobile, paper)
- Higher education focus
- Language translations
- Peer university clients
- Pricing
- Stakeholder involvement
- Value-added benefits (e.g., University rankings and resource libraries)

The following vendors were evaluated:

- DecisionWise
- Flex Surveys
- GreatRated! (through the Great Place to Work Institute)
- Higher Education Survey of Employee Engagement
- ModernThink (with Sue Rankin and Associates)
- Quantum Workplace
- Qualtrics
- Towers Watson

DecisionWise, ModernThink, and Quantum Workplace were invited to participate in product demonstrations.

E. Recommendations

1. Action Items: Listening Session and Community Forum Feedback
The majority of respondents stated that the single-most important action Wake Forest could take relates to enhancing the presence of gender-neutral restrooms and locker rooms on campus. The University can address this commonly cited feedback by considering the following recommendations:

- Continue fostering an inclusive community by converting additional single-flush restrooms to gender-neutral (beyond the 45 gender-neutral restrooms Wake Forest currently has across 16 buildings), as building codes allow.
- Replace signage on existing gender-neutral restrooms so they can be consistently identified across campus; ensure all signs have braille.
- Formalize a policy outlining the appropriate process for requesting signage, thereby restricting individual departments from ordering and installing their own restroom signs.
- Draft a policy on the usage of locker rooms by the transgender community on campus.
- Use the virtual campus map to indicate buildings with gender-neutral restrooms; publishing a listing of the locations to the Human Resources website.

2. Ongoing Assessment: Focus Groups and Campus-Wide Survey

The subcommittee, with input from University leaders, recommends scheduling LGBTQ focus groups for students, faculty, and staff in Fall 2015. As the leading vendor identified during the research stage, ModernThink would be poised to moderate these focus groups and provide summary findings. Their collaboration with Sue Rankin and Associates would align Wake Forest with a nationally recognized research leader on campus climate for LGBTQ people. Rankin would bring experience from conducting the following national studies:

- 2015 National Transgender Discrimination Survey
- 2011 Lives of Transgender People
- 2011 NCAA Student-Athlete Climate Study
- 2010 State of Higher Education for LGBTQ People
Following the focus groups, the subcommittee recommends assessing campus-wide climate through a comprehensive survey, which would gather engagement metrics on:

- Campus Environment and Facilities
- Communication and Collaboration
- Community and Pride
- Compensation, Benefits, and Work–Life Balance
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Job Satisfaction
- Leadership, Mission, and Values
- Policies
- Professional Development
- Support and Interaction

As part of this ongoing assessment effort, Wake Forest could continue to leverage the benefits of a partnership with ModernThink. Using ModernThink’s higher education specific climate survey would enable the University to benchmark against data from the following Top–25 institutions:

- California Institute of Technology
- Cornell
- Duke
- Emory
- Georgetown
- Harvard
- Notre Dame
- Rice
- Stanford
- University of Southern California

Additionally, the University would have the opportunity to be rated among ModernThink’s listing of “Great Colleges to Work For,” which is published in The Chronicle of Higher Education.

III. Best Practices Subcommittee Report
A. Charge

The Best Practices Subcommittee will conduct research on best practices at other institutions related to gender identity and sexual orientation in order to propose solutions to identified barriers on our campus.

B. Membership

Shonda Jones, convener
Brett Eaton
Todd Hairston
Jennifer Killingsworth
Penny Sinanoglou
Lynn Sutton
Staff: Kimberly Quick

C. Deliberative Process

The Best Practices Subcommittee contacted 14 colleges and universities that have a stellar rating through the Campus Pride Index and/or were among Princeton Review’s list of the most LGBT-friendly colleges and universities in the U.S, successfully interviewing 8 (57%) of these institutions. These institutions included: Stanford University, Warren Wilson College, Emory University, Carleton College, Tulane University, University of Louisville, Bard College, and Vassar College.

Each of the colleges and universities was asked the same set of questions in person or via email. The questions posed covered a broad range of aspects and were designed to learn about best practices related to gender identity and sexual orientation at these institutions. A complete list of questions can be found in Appendix C.

D. Research
Best practices from the colleges/universities interviewed highlighted the need for gender-neutral restrooms in both administrative and academic buildings, as well as in student life and housing buildings. Several of the institutions also noted the importance of designating gender-neutral bathrooms in new construction and renovated spaces for restrooms and locker rooms. At least one university cited the importance of a gender-neutral housing policy for students.

Other best practices were related to employee relations and benefits. The focus in this area was on issues of equity within faculty and staff, rather than students. The aim for several institutions was to remove any restrictions from healthcare related to transgendered individuals. Additionally, some institutions have established and highlighted human resource policies for same sex families (including hiring policies, spousal hires, health care policies irrespective of marriage).

Most of the colleges and universities that were a part of our research had abundant resources for LGBTQ-focused programming. Many of these institutions encouraged academic and co-curricular programming that would provide comprehensive education and training about gender and sexuality that spans from freshman year through graduation. For instance, one practice that could raise awareness and promote education is to have the LGBTQ Center as a stop on campus tours.

Further, our research yielded general information that should prove useful for our work as a community of teachers/scholars and learners. For instance, several institutions have named or renamed their center tasked with leading this work with “gender” and “sexuality” language. A couple of colleges and universities encouraged that we resist assumptions of who the constituency is related to LGBTQ affairs, since LGBTQ affairs should matter to everyone. Some institutions urged that as we continue our efforts that we be guided by a set of principles rather than a set of “best practices.” This set of principles could guide us as we seek to live in a more diverse, just, and equitable educational environment for faculty, staff, and students.
E. Recommendations

Based on the research conducted by the Best Practices Subcommittee, the following recommendations are made:

1. Designate gender-neutral bathrooms across campus, both in administrative and academic buildings, as well as in student life and student housing buildings. New construction and renovated spaces should specify parameters that include gender-neutral bathrooms and locker rooms.
2. Establish a gender-neutral housing policy for students with the default being that a student is paired with a same-sex individual unless they opt-out.
3. Remove any restrictions from healthcare related to transgender individuals.
4. Encourage appropriate offices to continue to develop comprehensive gender and sexuality trainings and educational opportunities that span the student’s time at WFU; additionally, target faculty and staff for educational opportunities as well.
5. Investigate whether the naming of our LGBTQ Center represents the scope of the work envisioned at Wake Forest.

IV. Policy Subcommittee Report

A. Charge

The Policy Subgroup of the President’s Commission on LGBTQ Affairs will examine Wake Forest policies, standards, and procedures to identify barriers to equity for students, faculty, and staff based on gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

B. Membership

Kriss Dinkins (convener)
Shannon Gilreath
Gracie Harrington
Reid Morgan
Barbee Oakes

C. Deliberative Process

The Policy subcommittee met to identify needs. Angela Mazaris, the Director of the LGBTQ Center, joined us regularly to discuss needs and implications related to them. The subcommittee met with the Best Practices subcommittee to learn from their findings from other institutions. A working document of recommendations was maintained by the subcommittee and regular reports were given to the Commission.

D. Research

The Policy subcommittee worked with the leadership of the LGBTQ Center on data. Members of the subcommittee attended the forums held during the Fall of 2014 to gather information from students, faculty and staff. The subcommittee collected information from various departments, including the draft of the gender neutral housing policy from Residence Life and Housing.

E. Recommendations

1. Address the need to provide transgender related health care coverage for both student and faculty/staff in our health insurance policies.
   - Both student and faculty/staff health insurance policies include blanket exclusions for transgender related care. Policies exclude any treatment related to gender dysphoria. This is a barrier to equity as they cannot access necessary medical care.
   - The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Corporate Equality Index requires good coverage to get a top score.
   - Wake Forest University is out of compliance with our own non-discrimination policy as we are not providing medically necessary care to some people based on their gender identity.

Next steps: Faculty and staff coverage has been addressed. Human Resources (Carmen Canales) will continue to manage this benefit. Student coverage will continue to be explored under the leadership of Campus Life (Penny Rue).
2. Address the need for a policy for bathroom and locker room use for transgender/gender non-conforming students, faculty, and staff as well as the need to modify our facilities to meet this need.
   - There are two separate issues. (1) Gender neutral bathroom and locker room policies and (2) not having single-user/unisex bathrooms and locker room facilities in place on our campus.
   - Students are making a request for an explicit policy on bathrooms and locker rooms.

Next steps: The LGBTQ Commission Policy Subcommittee will work with the LGBTQ Center to draft a governing document (policy) to address gender neutral bathroom and locker room use. Facilities and Campus Services (Greg Scott) will continue to work with the LGBTQ Center and Human Resources to install signage to identify the 45+ bathrooms. Campus Life (Penny Rue) will explore gender neutral locker rooms.

3. Address the need for adding a gender-neutral housing option for our students.
   - A gender-neutral housing option would allow students to access housing regardless of gender. Without offering this option, LGBTQ students, particularly transgender, genderqueer students and gay men, feel unsafe on their residence halls. Residence Life and Housing policies are an area in which we have room for improvement based on our rankings on the Campus Pride Climate Index and other evaluations.
   - The recommendation is to establish an opt-in policy. Upperclass students who choose this option will select a roommate and be assigned regardless of gender. If approved, the policy will not infringe on people who do not want a gender-neutral experience.
   - The committee recommends developing language and procedures to address the needs of incoming first-year students as well.

Next steps: Campus Life, specifically Residence Life and Housing (Penny Rue), will address this need. An approach has been designed to support the option for upperclass students. First-year student needs will be addressed on an individual basis consistent with our approach to other special needs.
4. Address the need to establish standards and procedures for name changes and gender marker changes throughout our data systems.
   - Within our University data systems, we have many places where name and gender are captured.

Next steps: The Banner Data Custodians in partnership with Information Systems (Kriss Dinkins) will address this need.

5. Address the need for the collection of LGBTQ demographics of students, faculty, and staff in order to measure satisfaction and track retention, success, etc.
   - This information can best be collected by Admissions, Human Resources, and Institutional Research.
   - This information will be used to measure success in recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff.

Next steps: The Provost’s Office (Lynn Sutton) will work with the various admissions offices, Human Resources, and perhaps Institutional Research to address this need.

VI. Commission Follow-up

President Hatch has designated the Vice President for Campus Life, Vice Provost, and AVP for Human Resources to provide ongoing follow up to the Commission’s recommendations. This group will monitor each recommendation for progress and determine an appropriate point person. As new issues emerge, this group will consider them and seek guidance from cabinet colleagues as needed, maintaining ongoing communication with professionals in the LGBTQ Resource Center. Their work will be paired with an annual forum designed to improve communication, transparency and accountability.
Appendix A
President’s Commission on LGBTQ Affairs Membership
2014–2015

Nathan O. Hatch
President

Chair
Penny Rue
Vice President of Campus Life

Members
Carmen Canales
   Director of Human Resources
Brook Davis
   Associate Professor of Theatre
Kriss Dinkins
   Director of Knowledge and Service Support
Brett Eaton
   Associate Vice President of Communication and External Relations
Shannon Gilreath
   Associate Professor of Law
Adam Goldstein
   Dean of Students
Todd Hairston
   Associate Athletic Director of Compliance
Gracie Harrington
   Student
Shonda Jones
   Associate Dean of Admission and Student Service, School of Divinity
Rogan Kersh
   Provost
Jennifer Killingsworth
   Assistant Director of General Accounting
Sonia Kuguru
Student
Angela Mazaris
  Director of the LGBTQ Center
Reid Morgan
  Senior Vice President and General Counsel
Barbee Oakes
  Assistant Provost for Diversity and Inclusion
Mark Petersen
  Vice President of University Advancement
Penny Sinanoglou
  Assistant Professor of History
Lynn Sutton
  Vice Provost
Jose Villalba
  Associate Dean, Wake Forest College

Ex Officio
Mary Pugel
  President's Chief of Staff

Commission Staff
Rob Powell
  Program Coordinator, LGBTQ Center and Women's Center
Kimberly Quick
  Fellow, Provost's Office
Appendix B
President's Commission on LGBTQ Affairs
Schedule of Full Commission Meetings

September 3, 2014, 3:00 PM
   Autumn Room

November 18, 2014, 11:00 AM
   Autumn Room

March 3, 2015, 11:00 PM
   Autumn Room

May 12, 2015, 11:00 PM
   Autumn Room
Appendix C
Best Practices Questions

- What are some of your more popular programs?
- How do you represent the LGBTQ community in the admissions marketing materials?
- Do you have gender-neutral bathrooms and housing?
- Is there a support system for LGBTQ+ students of faith? Are there tensions between religious groups on campus and the respect and wellbeing of LBGTQ persons? If so, how does your institution navigate that?
- How are the experiences of LGBTQ persons represented through the curriculum or through academic programming? What academic offerings exist surrounding questions of gender identity or sexual orientation?
- Is there a centralized place where the work is done regarding the LGBTQ community? What is that place, and why was it chosen?
- What benefits do you offer transgender employees? (Transgender inclusive health care, etc.)
- Does your school actively recruit LGBTQ identified prospective students at Campus Pride’s LGBTQ Friendly College Fair?
- Is there any introduction to cultural competencies built into freshman orientation?
- What training opportunities exist beyond orientation for faculty, staff, and students? Are they required, and if not, how do you encourage participation?
- What have been the barriers that your institution has encountered in their work to develop a safer and more inclusive campus? What patterns have you seen, and what advice can you give?
- Do you have any type of written policies or documents specifically pertaining to LGBTQ members of your community? Are you willing to share those with Wake Forest?
- What is your institution doing to establish standards and procedures for name changes and gender marker changes throughout data systems?
How does your institution address the need for the collection of LGBTQ demographics of students, faculty, and staff in order to measure satisfaction and track retention, success, etc.?